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History 12  
Study Guide  
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### Study Guide ---- Arab-Israeli war of 1948

✚ When and where:



The stage of this war was set in Former British Mandate of Palestine (the British Empire had control of Palestine area from 1920 to 1948), Sinai Peninsula, southern Lebanon. The Jews and the Arabs had five main war. The first Arab-Israeli war was the one happened in 1948.

✚ Who is fighting:

Arab-Israeli war of 1948 was mainly fighting between the Jewish people and the Arabs. There were a variety of Jewish groups gathered and formed IDF [Israel



defense forces]. Haganah [“a Jewish paramilitary organization” (Wikipedia) in Mandate Palestine], Palmach [a combination of the best army forces from the Haganah and the underground army of the Jewish community (Wikipedia)], Irgun [a Zionist group established since 1931; joined IDF in 1948 (military wiki)], and Lehi [a Zionist organization founded by Avraham Stern in 1940, which called National Military Organization in Israel originally; joined IDF in 1948 (Wikipedia)] were all on the Israeli side. After May 26<sup>th</sup> 1948, Israel Defense Forces and Minorities Units also joined the war. Otherwise, the only foreign forces, which joined the Israeli side, was Mahal. On the Arab side, the two major army forces were Holy War Army [a group of Palestinian Arab irregular force that were anti-Zionists (Wikipedia)] and Arab Liberation Army [formed by an army of volunteers from Arab countries; they were



anti-Zionists as well as Arab nationalists (Wikipedia)]. Four foreign countries’ volunteers also participated in the war, who were the Muslim Brotherhood, Yemenite Arab, Pakistani, and Sudanese. In addition, the British forces had a few forces to intervene in the war. The war was originally considered as a civil war. Then, the war turned into “an inner-state conflict” (Wikipedia) between Israelis and Arabs. The US decided to back up Israel, and forced Arab states to stop the invasion of Israel. This helped Israel to get ready for the further invasion from the Arab states. In fact, the action by the United States had a direct effect on the outcome of the Arab-Israeli War of 1948.



- At midnight on next day, the British Mandate was officially terminated, and the State of Israeli came into being.
- Several hours later, the neighbor countries Iraq, Arab States, Egypt, Jordan and Syria invaded the newborn state (attacked Jewish settlements).
- Initially, Arab planned to call for Syrian and Lebanese forces to invade from north, while Jordanian and Iraqi forces were to invade from east.
- In south, the Egyptians were to advance and take Tel Aviv.
- However, Abdullah (King of Jordan) rejected this plan, which served Syrian interests.
- Why?
- His allies were afraid to go to the war without his army.
- Lebanon decided not to take part in the war at the last minute due to the still influential Christians' opposition.
- Arab armies made a revised plan to invade the new state contributed to Israel's success in withstanding the Arab invasion. (Abdullah wanted Jerusalem)
- The Jewish forces wanted to stop the Arab armies, although the Arabs took the initiative.
- As the British stopped blocking the incoming Jewish immigrants and arms supply, the Israeli forces grew steadily with large numbers of immigrants and weapons.
- This allowed the Haganah to transform itself from a paramilitary force into a real army.
- Initially, the fighting was handled mainly by Haganah, along with the smaller Jewish military groups: Irgun and Lehi.
- On 26 May, 1948, Israel established the Israel Defense Force (IDF) incorporating these forces into one military under a central command.

### *Battle of Latrun*

- The heaviest fighting occurred in Jerusalem.
- In order to deal with the Egyptian advance, the Israelis abandoned the Latrun fortress overlooking the main highway to Jerusalem, which the Arab Legion immediately seized as well as the Latrun Monastery.
- The Jordanians were able to cut off supplies to Israeli fighters and civilians in Jerusalem.
- The Israelis attempted to take the Latrun fortress in a series of battles, but the Arab Legion had Latrun and managed to repulse the attacks.

- During the attacks, Israeli forces suffered 586 casualties, among them, Mickey Marcus, Israel's first general, who was killed by friendly fire.
- The besieged Israeli Jerusalem was only saved via the opening of "Burma Road", a makeshift bypass road built by Israeli forces that allowed Israeli supply convoys to pass into Jerusalem.
- Jordanian sharpshooters killed several road workers.

### *Battle for Jerusalem*

- After the Jordanians in Latrun cut off supplies to western Jerusalem. Some supplies, mostly munitions, were airdropped into the city.
- The shortage of food, water, fuel and medicine was acute, and the Israelis forces were seriously short of food, water and ammunitions.
- King Abdullah ordered Glubb Pasha, the commander of the Arab Legion, to enter Jerusalem on 17 May.
- The Arab Legion fired 10,000 artillery and mortar shells a day.
- The Arab Legion eventually succeeding in pushing Israeli forces from the Arab neighbors of Jerusalem as well as Jewish Quarter.
- 1,500 Jewish inhabitants were expelled, and several hundred were detained,
- Thomas C. Wasson, the US Consul-General in Jerusalem and a member of the UN Truce Commission was shot dead in West Jerusalem.
- It was disputed whether Wasson was killed by the Arabs and Israelis.

### *Air Operations*

- All Jewish aviation assets were placed under the control of the Sherut Avir (Air Service, known as SA) in November, 1947.
- Flying operations began in the following month from a small civil airport on the outskirts of Tel Aviv called Sde Dov.
- At the outbreak of the war on 15 May, the SA became the Israeli Air Force.
- On 15 May, with the beginning of the war, four Royal Egyptian Air Force (REAF) Spitfires attacked Tel Aviv, bombing Sde Dov Airfield, where the bulk of Sherut Avir's aircraft were concentrated, as well as the Reading Power Station (natural gas fueled power station supplying electrical power to the Tel Aviv District in central Israel).

- This caused some aircrafts were damaged and destroyed, and five Israelis were killed.
- Next Six Days, the REAF would continue to attack Tel Aviv, causing civilian casualties.
- Then they attacked the Tel Aviv Central Bus Station, rural settlements and airfields.
- As more effective air defenses were transferred to Tel Aviv, the Egyptians began taking significant aircraft losses.
- Although lacking fighter or bomber aircraft, Israel's embryonic air force still attacked Arab targets,
- The balance of air power soon began to swing in favor of the Israeli Air Force following the arrival of 25 Avia fighters and 62 Spitfires from Czechoslovakia.
- Many of the pilots who fought for the Israeli Air Force were foreign volunteers or mercenaries, including many World War II veterans.
- On 3 June, Israel scored its first victory in aerial combat when Israeli pilot Modi Alon shot down a pair of Egyptian DC-3s.
- The Israeli Air Force began intercepting and engaging Arab aircraft on bombing missions.

#### *Sea Battles*

- At the outset of the war, the Israeli Navy consisted of three former Aliyah Bet ships that had been seized by the British and impounded in Haifa harbor.
- Three ships:  
the INS Eilat (an ex-US Coast Guard icebreaker)  
the INS Haganah  
INS Wedgwood (had been Royal Canadian Navy corvettes)
- The ships were put into minimum running condition, in order not to arouse British suspicions,

#### *End of the First Phase*

- The Arabs were only able to make limited gains due to fierce Israeli resistance, and were quickly driven off their new holdings by Israeli counterattacks.
- The IDF managed to field more troops than the Arab forces.

\*In July 1948, the IDF had 63,000 troops

Early Spring in 1949: 115,000 troops

- Upon the implementation of the truce, the IDF had control over nine Arab cities and towns.
- The combined Arab forces captured 14 Jewish settlement points, but only one of them was in the territory of the proposed Jewish State.
- Syrian army: 315 killed, 400-500 injured
- Iraqi expeditionary force: 200 killed, 500 injured
- Jordan Arab Legion: 300 killed, 400-500 injured (including irregulars and Palestinian volunteers fighting under Jordanians)
- Egyptian army: 600 killed, 1,400 injured
- 800 Jews were taken hostage by the Arabs
- 1,300 Arabs were taken hostage by the Jews, mostly Palestinians

#### *First Truce: 11 June - 8 July 1948*

- The UN declared a truce on 29 May, which came into effect on 11 June and lasted 28 days.
- Neither side would make any gains from the truce.
- However, neither side respected the truce.
- Both the Israelis and the Arabs used this time to improve their positions.

#### *Reinforcements*

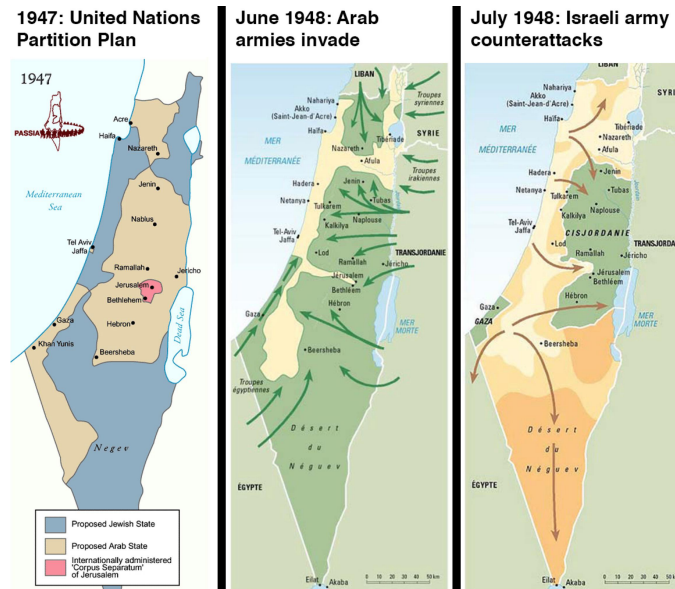
- The Israelis sought to bolster their forces by massive import of arms.
- The IDF was able to acquire weapons from Czechoslovakia as well as improve training of forces and recognition of the army.
- Yitzhak Rabin, an IDF commander at the time of the war and later Israel's fifth Prime Minister, stated "[w]ithout the arms from Czechoslovakia... it is very doubtful whether we would have been able to conduct the war".
- Israel increased its manpower from approximately 30,000-35,000 men to almost 65,000 during the truce due to mobilization and constant immigration into Israel.
- More than 25,000 rifles, 5,000 machine guns, fifty-million bullets.

#### *UN mediator Bernadotte*

- The ceasefire was overseen by UN mediator Folke Bernadotte and a team of UN observers made up of army officers from Belgium, United States, Sweden and France.

- Bernadotte presented a new partition plan, which he proposed there be a Palestinian Arab State alongside Israel and that a “Union” be established between the two sovereign state of Israel and Jordan.

## Second Phase: 8-18 July 1948 (“Ten Day Battles”)



- On 8 July, the day before the expiration of the truce, Egyptian forces under General Muhammad Naguib renewed the war by attacking Negba.
- The following day, Israeli Air Forces launched a simultaneous offensive on all three fronts: Quneitra, Arish and Tel Aviv.
- The fighting continued for then days, it was dominated by large-scale Israeli offensives and a defensive posture from the Arab side.

### *Southern front*

- In the south, the IDF carried out several offensives.
- Hardly any Arab villages in the south fought back, due to miserable poverty of their means and lack of weapons, and suffered expulsion.
- On 12 July, the Egyptians launched an offensive action and again attacked Negba, which they had previously failed to capture.
- However, the Egyptians were repulsed again, with suffering 200-300 casualties, while the Israelis lost 5 dead and 16 wounded.



- After failing to take Negba, the Egyptians turned their attention to more isolated settlements and positions.
- They attacked the lightly defended village of Be'erot Yitzhak.
- The IDF reinforcements arrived and drove out the attackers.
- The Egyptians suffered an estimated 200 casualties, while the Israelis had 17 dead and 15 wounded.
- The battle was one of Egypt's last offensive actions during the war, and they didn't attack any Israeli villages following this battle.

#### *Lydda and Al-Ramla*

- Israeli Operation Danny was the most important Israeli offensive, aimed at securing and enlarging the corridor between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv by capturing the roadside cities: Lydda and Ramla.
- Also relieve the Jewish population and forces in Jerusalem.
- Lydda had become an important military center in the region, lending support to Arab military activities elsewhere.
- Ramla was one of the main obstacles blocking Jewish transportations.
- The IDF forces gathered to attack the city and captured the city on 11 July.

#### *Southern Galilee*

- The second plans Operation Dekel, which was aimed at capturing the Lower Galilee including Nazareth.
- Finally, the whole Lower Galilee was captured by Israel.

#### *Eastern Galilee*

- Operation Brosh was launched in a failed attempt to dislodge Syrian forces.
- 200 Syrians and 100 Israelis were killed.
- The Israeli Air Force also bombed Damascus for the first time.

#### *Second Truce: 18 July - 15 October 1948*

- The Second Truce of the conflict went into effect by the UN.

- On 16 September, Count Folke Bernadotte proposed a new partition for Palestine in which the Negev would be divided between Jordan and Egypt, and Jordan would annex Lydda and Ramla
- Jerusalem would be internationalized, with municipal autonomy for the city's Jewish and Arab inhabitants.
- The Port of Haifa would be a free port.
- Lydda Airport would be a free airport.
- All Palestinian refugees would be granted the right of return, and those who chose not to return would be compensated for lost property.
- The UN would control and regulate Jewish Immigration.
- However, the plan was rejected by both sides.
- Bernadotte was assassinated in Jerusalem by the militia Zionist group Lehi on 17 September.
- On 22 September 1948, the Provisional State Council of Israel passed the Area of Jurisdiction and Powers Ordinance.
- The law officially added to Israel's size by annexing all land it had captured since the war began.

### **Third Phase: 15 October 1948 - 10 March 1948**

- Israel launched a series of military operations to drive out the Arab armies and secure the northern and southern borders of Israel.

#### *Northern front - Galilee*

- Irregular Arab forces refused to recognize the truce, and continued to harass Israeli forces and settlement in the north.
- The same day, the Arab Liberation Army violated the truce by attacking Manaron, capturing the strongpoint of Sheikh Abed, repulsing counterattacks by local Israeli units.
- Manara and Misgav Am were totally cut off, and Israel's protests at the UN failed to change the situation.

- On 24 October, the IDF launched Operation Hiram and captured the entire upper Galilee area, driving the Lebanese Army back to Lebanon, and ambushing and destroying an entire Syrian battalion.
- The Israeli force of four infantry brigades was commanded by Moshe Carmel.
- The entire operation lasted just 60 hours, and Arab losses were estimated at 400 dead and 500 taken prisoner, with low Israeli casualties.
- At the end of the month, the IDF had captured the whole of Galilee, driven all Lebanese forces out of Israel, and had advanced 5 miles (8.0 km) into Lebanon, occupying thirteen Lebanese villages.

### *Negev*

- Israel launched a series of military operations to drive out the Arab armies and secure the borders of Israel.
- Israel decided to destroy or at least driven out the Egyptian expeditionary force since the Egyptians front lines were too vulnerable as permanent borders.
- On 22 December, the IDF launched Operation Horev (also called Operation Ayin). The goal was to drive all remaining Egyptian forces from the Negev.
- It destroyed the Egyptian threat on Israel's southern communities and forced the Egyptians into a ceasefire.
- On 10 March 1949, Israeli soldiers raised a hand-made Israeli flag ("The Ink Flag"), it was considered to be the end of the war.

### *UN Resolution 194*

In December 1948, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 194. It called to UN Conciliation Commission to facilitate peace between Israel and Arab States. However, many of the resolution's articles were not fulfilled, since these were opposed by Israel, rejected by the Arab States.

### End results of the conflict

The Arab side was winning the war at the beginning. They kept pushing on the Jews. Nevertheless, the situation did not last for long, and there was a sudden turning point of the war since the US government intervene in the war. The UN claimed that

the Arabs were too violent, and both sides were called to ceasefire. This gave the Israelis a lot of time to get prepare for the war. IDF was established during that time. The US, the Soviet Union, and some other big countries supported Israel and blamed the Arabs. The Security Council threatened the Arab government. With the back support from the US, the Jews won their war of independence.

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